were not absorbed in the company's Nasik Unit;

(b) the reasons for their non-absorption in view of their specialised training in aeronautics;

(c) whether Government have received any representation from the unions; and

(d) if so, the action taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) One hundred sixteen apprentices trained by Hindustan Aeronautics could not be absorbed in the company's Nasik Unit.

(b) Due to dwindling work-load, low order book position and the availability of surplus man-power, these apprentices trained by Nasik Unit of the HAL could not be absorbed.

(c) Yes, the Government have received representations from the unions from time to time.

(d) The representations have been replied to and the unions have been informed that the ex-trainees will be provided employment as and when suitable vacancies arise.

CAG's recommendations on inexperienced flying instructors

3848. SHRI O.P. KOHLI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news appearing in 'The Hindu' dated the 24th June, 1998, under the caption "IAF Instructors inexperienced, feels CAG"; and

(b) if so, the steps proposed to be taken in pursuance of the CAG's recommendations in his latest report in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The flying instructors and senior flying supervisors posted to flying training establishments are carefully selected depending on their qualifications and experience. Before a pilot is posted as an instructor, he under-goes a rigorous 6 months course for flying instructional duties, followed up by upgradation of his category through written and flying examinations. In addition, constant checks are maintained to review the qualitative aspects of training.

Chinese assistance for developing Ghauri

3849. DR. B.B. DUTTA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that China had provided technological assistance to Pakistan for development of its latest ballistic missile "Ghauri";

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) what has been the reaction of the Chinese Army Chief who recently visited India; and

(d) what is India's position so far as surface to surface missile are concerned?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b) Pakistan does not have technological base to indigenously develop on its own a missile of 1500 km range. Reports suggest that the missile technology has been procured by Pakistan from a third country. Chinese assistance to Pakistan's missile programme is well known.

(c) During the recent visit of General Fu Quanyou, Chief of the General Staff of PLA of China, he met the three Service Chiefs and also called on the Raksha Mantri and the Prime Minister. During the meetings with the RM and the PM, matters of mutual interest and concern were discussed in a friendly atmosphere.

(d) 'Prithvi', a surface-to-surface missile system, developed under Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme (IGMDP) for Army is under production. Work on the Air Force and

Naval versions of Prithvi is progressing. Government approval has also been given for design and development of next phase of Agni, i.e. long range system using state-of-the-art technologies developed indigenously.

Army laboratories to private sector

3850. SHRIMATI JAYAPRADA NAHATA:
SHRI GHUFRAN AZAM:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether he has thrown open some of its major research laboratories to the private industry and set up six task forces to work out the parameters for long standing cooperation between the Ministry and the Industry;

(b) whether the task force would be instructed to ensure that defence secretary is not leaked; and

(c) the advantages to be accrued to the country by throwing open the army laboratories to private sector?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) Eight laboratories of Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) working in the areas of life science, water purification, materials including composites, electronics, advanced computing, robotics and artificial intelligence have been identified for industries' participation. Six task forces have been constituted to submit recommendations to enhance the partnership between the Defence Ministry and the Industry.

(b) Adequate measures will be taken to ensure that sensitive and classified information about programmes of Ministry of Defence is not disclosed.

(c) The enhanced partnership between DRDO laboratories and industry will enable optimum use of the expertise and infrastructure available in the Industry for Defence Research and Development programmes.

Aerial bombs

3851. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have received complaints that despite the ban in dealing with middlemen and agents, concerned officials in the Ministry and IAF were insisting on buying aerial bombs from a Romanian Trading agent;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what action has been taken by Government to find out the factual position and the outcome thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b) Government has received a complaint from a Romanian firm by the name Ratmil, which claims to be the only manufacturer of aerial bombs in Romania and also claims to have the licence from the Ministry of Defence, Romania for supplying these bombs to the Ministry of Defence, Government of India, Ratmil also claimed that Romtehnica with whom the Ministry of Defence had negotiated the contract is not the manufacturer but only a trading company.

(c) Immediately on receipt of this complaint the file records were carefully perused and it was found that the allegation was completely incorrect. In fact, Romtehnica with whom Ministry of Defence has carried out negotiations, had supplied a certificate issued by the Ministry of Defence Romania certifying that Romtehnica is the only authorised firm to deal with such supplies. The Indian Ambassador to Romania was asked to make necessary enquiries and to confirm as to who is empowered by the Romanian Ministry of Defence to contract with the Ministry of Defence, Government of India for supplying the bombs. The Romanian Ministry of Defence has confirmed that the State owned Company "Romtehnica" under the Romanian Ministry of Defence is the